

I look forward to your response and would be pleased to include it and this letter in the report on H.R. 3006.

Sincerely,

COLLIN C. PETERSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, July 27, 2007.

Hon. COLLIN C. PETERSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for the opportunity to review the text of H.R. 3006, a bill to improve the use of a grant of a parcel of land to the State of Idaho. As you know, the Committee on Natural Resources was granted an additional referral on this legislation due to provisions therein which fall under the Committee's jurisdiction.

Because of the continued cooperation and consideration that you have afforded me and my staff in developing these provisions, and knowing of your interest in expediting this legislation, I will discharge H.R. 3006 from further consideration by the Committee on Natural Resources. Of course, this waiver is not intended to prejudice any future jurisdictional claims over these provisions or similar language. I also reserve the right to seek to have conferees named from the Committee on Natural Resources on these provisions, and request your support if such a request is made.

Please place this letter into the committee report on H.R. 3006 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

With warm regards, I am
Sincerely,

NICK J. RAHALL, II,
Chairman.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3006.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days with which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill just adopted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

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U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' CARE, KATRINA RECOVERY, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT AMENDMENT

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1716) to amend the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007, to strike a requirement relating to forage producers.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 1716

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONTRACT WAIVER.

The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110-28; 121 Stat. 112) is amended by striking section 9012.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Dakota.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of S. 1716, legislation that would ensure that U.S. livestock producers will be able to utilize the vital disaster assistance recently approved by this Congress.

The effect of this bill is essentially identical to an amendment last week by my colleague and friend from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) to the Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act, which I supported and which was unanimously accepted.

This legislation is critical to deliver on the promise we made to American livestock producers just this past May. After more than a year's effort and despite several veto threats from the President, we were successful in passing much-needed disaster assistance through this Chamber and enacted into law. Then, several months after the bill's passage, the Secretary of Agriculture determined that a certain phrase in the bill effectively denies aid to all livestock producers that didn't participate in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance program or a crop insurance pilot program for rangeland.

I assure my colleagues that this was not the intention of this Congress and, regardless of the accuracy of USDA's legal interpretation, we need legislative action to fix it. This bill simply strikes the one sentence in the disaster bill that is causing the problem.

I appreciate the leadership of the Agriculture Committee in working with me to find a solution to this problem,

and I am pleased to have the opportunity to offer this legislation. I also shared this problem with the leadership of the Appropriations Committee to ensure that this year's Agriculture appropriations bill contains language to address this as well, and I am pleased to report that it does. That would be unnecessary, however, if we can pass this stand-alone legislation and get it directly to the President. Doing so will solve this problem in time to prevent any delays in delivering much-needed assistance to American producers. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of the bill to amend S. 1716, which previously passed the other body and is now before the House.

In May, Congress passed and the President signed U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007. This law included disaster assistance for crop and livestock producers for losses sustained between January 1, 2005 and February 28, 2007.

Producers were able to receive payments for losses sustained in only one of these years and were required to be in a county that was declared a disaster county in that same calendar year. This law also contained provisions found in section 9012 requiring that forage producers must have participated in a crop insurance pilot program or the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance program during the crop year for which compensation is received.

As a result of section 9012, very few livestock producers are eligible for the disaster relief passed by Congress because crop insurance is more widely used in crop production than in livestock production. The amendment before the House will strike section 9012 to broaden the eligibility requirements to allow more livestock producers that suffered loss to participate than were allowed under the previously passed disaster package. The amendment before the House will not change direct spending because this amendment reconfirms the assumptions made when the Congressional Budget Office scored the original bill.

I believe section 9012 establishes an appropriate incentive for producers to manage their risk using the available tools. However, it is not reasonable to put this policy in place without warning. To tell producers in 2007 that they should have bought crop insurance in 2005 to get assistance for losses incurred in 2005 is not fair. Livestock producers should know, however, that in the future, crop insurance or participation in similar risk-management programs will likely be required to qualify for future disaster assistance.

I commend the gentlewoman from South Dakota and others who have